

**Lake Sylvia and Schafer State Parks CAMP**  
**Stage One**  
**Issues from Correspondence**

October 6, 2009

The purpose of stage one is to understand your hopes and concerns related to Lake Sylvia and Schafer State Parks. This helps the planning team get a sense of the range and type of issues it must consider through the planning process. Comments will also be used to determine environmental impacts consistent with State Environmental Policy Act.

These comments are from correspondence, mostly E-mail. Verbatim comments about each state park are in column one with the names of the park and issue in column two. Longer comments and letters are at the end of the document. We have attempted to group issues that are similar. This is difficult and we may have made mistakes. If you see your comment grouped with other comments that do not make sense to you, please contact Brian Hovis. In some cases, a comment is repeated for both parks when that was the intent of the participant.

Additional written comments (E-mail preferred) are welcome. Comments received before October 15, 2008 will be shared with the planning team before its next meeting.

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Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
I can't come to the meeting tonight but would like to keep Lake Sylvia open. It is a park that my husband and I go to every year and we enjoy very much camping on the lake side. Please keep me informed as to what is happening with this park.	Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes
Thank-you very much for this e-mail. I am quite interested in receiving e-mail updates regarding Lake Sylvia. My family recently camped there for the first time and we were absolutely enchanted. The obvious trail work going on was quite impressive; we took two long hikes. We really enjoyed the small, quiet campground, with kids on bikes and dogs on leashes passing by frequently. Staff in the office/store were helpful and friendly. Watched otters hunting in the lake for extended periods of time. Our campsite (#19) was just about perfect. We are tent campers and have to search long and hard for parks which are more suited to tents or smaller RVs/trailers. We definitely intend to return, with particular interest in the qualities mentioned above. Look forward to hearing about plans for this park.	Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes Trail development and operations
Can the noxious weeds in the park be controlled and something done to restore parts of the forest.	Lake Sylvia State Park Integrated pest management Forest regeneration Protection of plant and animal communities
Need gravel on the campsites better leveled out.	Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes
The road coming in to the park needs some work. There were holes and it was bumpy.	Lake Sylvia State Park Park roads

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>Yes, I am interested in preserving these parks. Since we in Grays Harbor County were instrumental in passing the "opt-Out" vehicle license clause, I do not understand why these parks are still threatened. Surely someone at State Parks realizes this county has high unemployment, low incomes, little industry, very little culture, and few affordable places for families and individuals to get away in nature. These parks are vital to our sanity. I feel keeping these two parks open is of vital importance to the health and well being of our impoverished county.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks</p>
<p>I do want to be kept up to date on the future of Lake Sylvia. We have been camping there every summer for more than 10 years and hold a very special place in our hearts for the area. Thank you for your work to help us keep our park. I am planning on attending the meeting on the 15th</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes</p>
<p>40 yrs or better going to that lake. I remember when the little ranger shack was a store. That might be cool for the kids again. Maybe lease half of it out. Just a thought. As far as the park is concerned I am sorry for all the budget cuts. It seems like our state government always wants to punish us for not wanting to raise taxes. They are missing the point. We want them to trim the fat, Mainly the inefficient workers that may be lounging around. Regardless it is my belief that there should be a certain percentage of first come camping sites that are non reserve-able. Even if it is only 10 %and not all junky ones. On the Parks that are first come I usually head down a day or 2 early and set up shop in which turn the state actually gets more revenue rather than someone reserving it for just the weekend which is many times the case especially on your waterfront ones. There ya have it.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks Campground changes</p>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>I spent 5 days at Sylvia in July, and think it is one of the best state parks around. Being able to camp right on the lake shore is amazing. And shaffer is great too, we have camped there on 3 different occasions this summer. I think its my favorite. I will be spending a lot of time there next summer as well.</p> <p>[In response to a question about where this person was from and that the reason I was asking is because some people thought is was mostly used by local residents, this person responded]: I am not from the Montesano area, but from Tacoma. We usually camp with 10 or so family members who live all over the puget sound-Belfair, Parkland, Olalla, Port Orchard, Auburn. I think a lot of people just don't know about it, because I am sure they would both be really popular.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes</p>
<p>State Parks and Local governments should share operation and maintenance of the state parks to keep them open. Also, some of the tax base generated by the state parks should come back to the state parks to bring in even more people.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks Campground changes</p>
<p>What are the possibilities of developing a connection with the USFS campground over the Wynochee Dam? Also what other recreational opportunities in the area can the park connect with ?</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Integrating with region recreational providers</p>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>My wife and I, along with our in laws and another couple stayed at Lake Sylvia last July 4th. We really enjoyed the park. The camp hosts were nice and the Park was very clean. We are planning on going back Memorial Day weekend if we can get reservations. We did one of the hikes around the park and plan to take another hike the next time we go. I hope with the budget shortfall the State is facing there will be a way to keep this nice little park open. It's probably very beneficial to Montesano and helps the State with tax revenue from purchases that are made by visitors. I spent about \$100.00 that weekend from local merchants in Montesano. I also think you guys are doing a great job based on our stays at a few different parks we have visited. Keep up the good work.</p> <p>[In answer to a question about the quality of the hikes, this person responded]: The hike we took was the 2miler at the opposite end of the lake from the swimming area. Easy hike through woods. We liked the covered bridge and the log bridge. Pretty cool! We look forward to taking the longer hike at the other end of the lake the next time we are there. 40 yrs or better going to that lake. I remember when the little ranger shack was a store. That might be cool for the kids again. Maybe lease half of it out. Just a thought. As far as the park is concerned I am sorry for all the budget cuts. It seems like our state government always wants to punish us for not wanting to raise taxes. They are missing the point. We want them to trim the fat, Mainly the inefficient workers that may be lounging around. Regardless it is my belief that there should be a certain percentage of first come camping sites that are non reserve-able. Even if it is only 10 %and not all junky one. On the Parks that are first come I usually head down a day or 2 early and set up shop in which turn the state actually gets more revenue rather than someone reserving it for just the weekend which is many times the case especially on your waterfront ones. There ya have it.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local economic development</li> <li>Economically sustainable parks</li> <li>Campground changes</li> <li>Trail development and operations</li> </ul>
<p>We camp at Lake Sylvia every year. We keep returning because of the simplicity of the campground and the great lakeside campsites. We enjoying kayaking on the lake and seeing the wildlife. The Park is a great resource as is, It does not need major upgrades that will take away from the unique experience that draws people back year after year. Please do not expand or make the campground more accessable for RVers. It is mainly a campground for tent campers and it should stay that way. Rver's have plenty of other options. Please do not move the campsites away from the lake. Because only non motorized boats are allowed on the Lake this lessens the impacts and pollution. Lake side tent camping has minimal impact on the lake.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water recreation</li> <li>Trail development and operations</li> </ul>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>We loved our 2 night stay in the middle of July at Lake Sylvia, My families only complaints is that there is no privacy between most of the sights and the huge motor homes that are allowed in such a small park. It is such a beautiful setting and being able to launch a boat right from the site is a wonderful benefit. I was out at 7 am watching the wildlife before breakfast. We also loved the swimming area away from the camping but still within walking distance. The hiking trails were all pristine I encouraged my grandkids to pick up what little litter we found on our way. Please keep me in mind if you have a "Clean up" as we are only an hour away</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Water recreation Trail development and operations</p>
<p>We stayed at Lake Sylvia last summer and thought it was beautiful. We scheduled to stay two nights this summer and were very excited. We even bought a boat to take full advantage of our lakeside campsite. Unfortunately, we had such a horrible experience, we will not be coming back. When we first checked in and went to our campsite, a lady was sitting at the bench fishing. My husband asked her to leave and she said the park officials told her she could use our spot. She then went on a tirade (cursing the whole time in front of our children) about how the locales are so sick of us out-of-towners coming to the park. Finally she left, yelling at us as she walked down the road. The first night was fine, but by the next afternoon, the campground quickly became a loud, party city. It seemed like half the sites were filled with locales who knew each other and were loudly cursing and partying. All night. We tried to go to sleep around 10 pm and the noise was incredible. People kept filing in, honking their horns, and yelling and laughing up to midnight. We kept thinking the camp hosts would quiet them down or call the police. Finally, around 2 or 3 in the morning (I think) one could hear someone beating up someone else, a woman screaming at the top of her lungs - and then, FINALLY, the cops. After a lot more noise, things finally settled down. We got about 4 hours of sleep, got up, ate a quick breakfast, more quickly broke up our campsite, and got out of Montesano! I'm not sure how important the park is to Montesano. The majority of the people who camped near us the second night clearly did not come mainly to enjoy the scenery and nature. And we got the feel they were mainly from the area (from overhearing the loud conversations). The disregard for others and then outright violence made us feel unsafe. And the lack of any authority to stop it for so long was amazing.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes Trail development and operations</p>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>Please add me to your address book in regards to the parks campaign. These Parks are such a vital part of our lives. When you think of a bad economy or a recession.....you think of Parks as untouchable. It takes a time like this to realize that they aren't untouchable, they are very fragile and we stand to lose them. Add me to the cause!!</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks</p>
<p>We recently made our first trip to Lake Sylvia. When we discovered the park on the state parks website, we were enchanted by the lovely setting and the opportunity to camp beside the lake. On arrival we were pleased with our campsite and its location. One of the main reasons we chose Lake Sylvia was the opportunity to camp right on the lakeside and enjoy the water for fishing and swimming. It was a huge disappointment to see the signs posted at the lakeside warning of leeches. I was glad I saw the sign before I ventured into the water. This information was and still is not on the parks website and we weren't informed of this upon checking in at the park. I wondered during our stay how many parents in adjacent campsites were letting their children swim in the lake and had not seen the sign about the leeches. Well, the warning sign was enough to keep us out of the water. We cut our stay short and do not plan on visiting the park again while there are leeches in the lake. It would be a service to park patrons to post this information on the parks website. Had we known about the leeches we would have chosen another park for our campout.</p> <p>We did enjoy walking the trails around the lake. The park staff was very friendly. The facilities (restroom and shower) while older were well maintained and cleaned. During our stay I noticed one of the restroom toilets became clogged and was quite a mess. When I returned to the restroom several hours later it had already been cleaned and repaired. I was really impressed with the quick response. We were there for several days and never saw the park host. We have stayed at several other parks with hosts and have always been greeted by the host at least once during our stay. The park is an easy commute from our home in Tacoma. If not for the leeches we would probably consider Lake Sylvia as one of our annual destinations. Thank you taking time to review our feedback.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes Trail development and operations</p>
<p>My Boy Scout troop from Aberdeen had an overnight outing [two adjacent campsites] at Lake Silvia this summer. My boys all had a great time, the park provided for a wonderful weekend.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes</p>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>I love Lake Sylvia--I stayed there for the first time this summer and had a great experience! I won't be at the workshop but would like to be on the contact list.</p> <p>In answer to the question: "What attracted you in the first place" this person responded]: The bright sunshine on the glossy green lake surface; the family-friendly swimming area; the bathrooms with showers for post-swimming; campsite #19--clean with a gorgeous view; nice people around; relatively quiet even for a Saturday night.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes</p>
<p>We really like Lake Sylvia state park. We try to go at least twice a year. The rest of the time, we go to parks that have power even though they are farther away. We would really love it if it had power. We would probably go there more often instead of the other parks.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Campground changes</p>
<p>Although I am not able to get to the September 15th meeting, I do have concerns I'd like to express. And although it was not stated in the email I was forwarded from the WNPS, I have a distinct feeling discussion will focus on park closure. I have spent many overnight camps at Lake Sylvia and its closure would be a huge loss. It is a popular spot for those who want to go camping /fishing or have a picnic without having to travel far. Because it is close and accessible, it has the unique potential to educate the public about the native flora,wildlife and hiking etiquette. WOULD there be possibilities of volunteer help? possibly from members of conservation-minded organizations?</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks</p>
<p>While I am regretfully unable to attend the meeting on the 15th of September, please continue to include me in updates and news regarding the parks, as Schafer State Park has become THE family favorite for the entire extended family and we certainly want to be aware of any changes. Thanks so much!</p> <p>[In answer to a question about where they were from, this person responded]: We come from Tacoma, and I am not sure why it would mostly be used by locals, as it is our favorite out-of-the-way place to go. Thank-you for your response.</p>	<p>Lake Sylvia State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks</p>



Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
<p>This e-mail is in regards to voicing my support to ensure that Schafer State Park is retained as a state park.</p> <p>My family and I are from Colorado and have dedicated a significant amount of our time to enjoying the outdoors. Almost every weekend, year-round, we can be found hiking and or fishing in the many parks that we have to choose from. Additionally, whenever we travel, we always look forward to the local outdoor experience. Schafer State Park is unique to us because of the fishing for salmon and trout in such a great forest setting. Visiting parks are a great way for my family to re-connect from the hectic environment that we live in, and it would be very unfortunate if the opportunity to experience Schafer State Park was no longer available. Our family has had a few great memories there and we look forward to timing future travels to Washington with the salmon run and enjoying it at Schafer State Park.</p>	<p>Schafer State Park Salmon restoration</p>
<p>I urge you to keep Schafer State Park open. We, the citizens, need a place of beauty and quiet to relax in today's fast-paced world – a place to sit by a river or “camp out” to get away “from it all” – to think about the pioneers, the early settlers, who made this area what it is. Question: Why not use some of the lottery money to maintain the parks? Oregon does, I understand.</p>	<p>Schafer State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks</p>
<p>As members of the Schafer family, we have a special attachment to Schafer State Park at Satsop. It is about the only public access for fishing of steelhead, cutthroat, salmon and sturgeon along the Satsop River. It is somewhat secluded being out in the country but has group camp grounds, cooking facilities, large fireplace and children's play equipment. All this makes it an attractive “get away from city living” recreational area. There is an educational area with a video of the Schafer story and historical items on display. There are beautiful old growth trees on the grounds and a nearby fish hatchery to explore. Schafer State Park is a destination so uncommon quality and we hope that it can remain an attractive public experience for generations to come.</p> <p>Thank you for your help.</p>	<p>Schafer State Park Salmon restoration</p>
<p>One more comment. Please consider making camp spots at Schafer Park reservable. With the high cost of gas and having to plan our excursions, it is really nice to know you will have a place to stay when you reach your destination. Thanks again for soliciting feedback from park users.</p>	<p>Schafer State Park Campground changes</p>

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
The park has knotweed problems and root rot problems for the trees.	Schafer State Park Integrated pest management Forest regeneration Protection of plant and animal communities
The group camp is closed because of the dying trees. The trees should be removed and re-planted with disease resistant varieties.	Schafer State Park Forest regeneration Protection of plant and animal communities
Replace and renovate the small kitchen shelter	Schafer State Park Day-use
I have e-mailed you in the past and I am doing so now to reaffirm my support for Schafer State Park. I own property adjacent to the park and see the enjoyment that so many people get from visiting the park each year. I would also offer my support along with that of my neighbors to help in any way possible to keep it open. As the park serves as a refuge for wildlife it is in everyones interest to keep it open and offlimits to hunters. I am not anti-hunting but I know that a herd of elk each season use that access to the river and across the adjacent properties as a safe haven. Thank you for your efforts to keep the park open. Let me know if there is any way that my neighbors and I can help.	Schafer State Park Protection of animal and plant communities Community partnerships
Please add me to your address book in regards to the parks campaign. These Parks are such a vital part of our lives. When you think of a bad economy or a recession.....you think of Parks as untouchable. It takes a time like this to realize that they aren't untouchable, they are very fragile and we stand to lose them. And me to the cause!!Thank you	Schafer State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks

Verbatim Comments	Park/Main Issue
State Parks and Local governments should share operation and maintenance of the state parks to keep them open. Also, some of the tax base generated by the state parks should come back to the state parks to bring in even more people.	Schafer State Park Local economic development Economically sustainable parks Campground changes
What are the possibilities of developing a connection with the USFS campground over the Winochee Dam? Also what other recreational opportunities in the area can the park connect with ?	Schafer State Park Integrating with region recreational providers

10/5/09

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Brian,

Per our emails and phone conversations regarding Schafer Park and the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF), use of the park for brood stocking salmon spawning stock for our Satsop Springs Hatchery, I have talked with our hatchery manager and others on our board of directors about what is needed for us to successfully brood stock at the park location just upstream of the county road bridge. The primary concern is the removal of the large rocks from the deep pool just upstream of the county road bridge. The pool has been created by a rock groin located on the west side of the River. It is my understanding this groin was constructed upstream of the bridge to keep the river centered in the channel as it approaches the bridge. The groin has created a nice hole in the river bottom that fish like to rest in during their upstream migration. Over time the rock groin has deteriorated and a few of the large rip rap rocks have washed into the hole, making it difficult to collect our brood stock fish with hook and line or seine nets. Our first priority is to get the large rocks removed from the pool.

The second consideration is being able to clear native shrubs and brush bordering the pool on an annual basis so fishing with rod and reel for the brood stock can be conducted. This year we received permission to remove some willows that were washed over the pool by last year's flooding. No upright trees are ever removed, just those that have been pushed over by the flooding which would make it difficult to fish from the bank and move them to the tank truck once caught. It is generally willow bushes that were trimmed and this has no effect on their survival.

We do need to continue to receive permission to take our truck through the gate at the parking lot to the river edge for close proximity of fishing and for loading the fish into the holding tank on the back of the truck for transport to the hatchery.

For your information, in the process of brood stocking we post signs on the bridge crossing the river at the park describing our activities and notify the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife of the dates and locations of our brood stocking activities. We are generally in communication with local park staff about these activities as well.

During our conversations about the park you expressed some interest in fish habitat projects in the river bordering park property. This can be done by installing large woody debris, or logs about 25 feet long with root wads attached. They can be keyed into the banks at appropriate locations to create cover and holding areas for salmonids. Another consideration is debris catchers which are piling driven into the river base at appropriate locations to collect large woody debris as it floats downstream during flooding. The debris catchers also create habitat and cover for fish by creating log jams. These kinds of projects are being done in other rivers around the state. Caution must be taken as to where large woody debris or log piling structures are placed because of the low bank elevations bordering the park. Improperly installed, these structures could easily divert the river through park and wipe out your facilities. I would advise seeking the advice of a good hydrologist and working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Engineering in this process. The Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force would be glad to assist with this process and assist with getting designs and implementation done. If sponsored through the CBFTF we have local permitting exemptions that can save on project costs. The CBFTF would need to approve these activities and approve the project construction based on the design criteria if chosen as a sponsor.

Further communication on this is obviously needed, and grant funding should to be applied for, unless you have a budget for doing in-stream work. Grant opportunities for the next hydraulic window have already past and the earliest you could get a grant sponsored project would be 2011. We are looking forward to meeting you on site at some point and working through this process.

Sincerely:

Lonnie Crumley, Chairman, CBFTF

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Schafer State Park Classification and Management Plan

14Sep2009

The primary objective is to: ***Preserve, protect and improve Schafer State Park to keep it a viable state asset for its second centennial.***

We will meet this goal by:

Preserving the historical core of the park through proper maintenance of the physical assets and continuing traditional use of the area.

- This might include designation of buildings as National Historic structures or designation of the core area as a National Historic Site. Note: The physical core is the original 27 acres plus land added in 1953 and the area on the north side of the river used for the Schafer Bros. picnics. (See attch.#1 Sketch)
- Replace the small shelter moved from the picnic area to the group camp
- Repair entrance stone structures.
- Reduce use of signage and convert signs, when replaced, to traditional wooden signs. Early park signs are in warehouse. We have yellow paint samples to convert white painted signs to yellow.
- **Refer to list of maintenance items** (Atch#2) discussed with ranger, area manager and assistant regional director for reconstruction and maintenance in May09 and coordinate with staff and volunteers to reduce list of any discrepancies or deferred maintenance.
- Consider changing parking barriers to reduce graveled area, removing BBQ stands, and moving FDR memorial plaque and tree to park office area.
- Obtain national/state historical designation
- Improve interpretive, especially historical, offerings
- Work with others to document history of park land as it was used by native Americans, logging companies, early state fish hatchery, settlers and early park users. This would involve continued work with local museums, state archives and interviewing the few remaining neighbors who lived in the area when the park was first built. Continue work to obtain old letters, photos and other documents detailing the park history.
- Traditional use. Add items removed over the years such as swings, horseshoe pits(done). Promote use by traditional users of park who might think it is now closed, such as fishing groups, ethnic lodges.

Protect the physical aspects of the park, both man-made and natural

- Some physical assets have already been mentioned. Others to protect might include remains of old state fish hatchery, both the trap and tanks (on adjacent property). Also included would be preservation of old orchard and meadow in group camp area and location/protection of grave sites. Preserve old fish hatchery trap remains.
- Flood damage mitigation: This is the biggest challenge and it was mentioned in reports at least 80 years ago. Presently, the SW Region staff is attempting to obtain permits from the WDF&W to enhance bank protection that will lessen infrastructure damage without damaging any fish habitat. Further protection is possible by removing camping items (stoves and tables and some signs) in the fall and by bulldozing out gully crossings in the camping area. This will reduce the amount of work required in the spring to prepare the park for opening. We can also work with nature by using walk-in camp sites in areas where roads are impractical along the river. Two sites were put in this year and proved popular.

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Remove flood debris annually to reduce smothering effect on existing native plants and to reduce the amount of mosquitoes in the area. Replant with native big leaf maple and red alder to replace trees lost to age and flooding. This is especially important along the river edges and along the growing gravel bar in the picnic area. Look at areas along river, river bar, near stumps, and where trees are nearing the end of their natural life. Plant willows to reduce bank erosion. SW Region continue to work with Chehalis Basin Task Force (salmon enhancement group) and Mason county on problem of rip rap falling into river on north side near bridge approach.

### **Habitat, flora and fauna protection and improvement**

Work to remove invasive ivy and blackberry bushes in park (good volunteer work project). Limit the spread of root rot through removal of diseased trees (under forest plan) and replacement with native resistant species. Thin out overgrown and stressed brush, especially in heavily used areas of the park to allow more vigorous growth. Chip or remove excess storm damage and do not allow to accumulate along trails and roads. Reseed grass areas to limit flood erosion in winter. Plant maple and alder in core area for a natural succession of trees. Inventory the plant and animal species, and if already done, print the information for public use. Work with the Chehalis Basin Task Force to support their continued use of the park to harvest brood stock. Remove rock dams built during the summer by children before winter floods and salmon runs. Promote park as a good site for schools to teach children about salmon habitat and stewardship. (This is done at Kennedy Creek in Thurston county and is very successful) Continue to support sport fishing as this is the only legal access to the East fork of the Satsop river. Monitor and protect the geological features that are unusual such as the fossil beds upstream at the old swimming hole. They have escaped vandalism, but still extra oversight is warranted.

### **Increase Viability in the eyes of the Commission**

One of the factors used by the State Parks Commission for selecting Schafer as a park to transfer was its low revenue and overall operating costs. Therefore an important **Improvement goal** should be to Increase revenue to maintain viability in the eyes of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. (add footnote with statistics) This can be done by increasing the revenue opportunities, increasing what the park can offer, and improving marketing strategies.

#### **-Increasing Revenue Opportunities**

This means adding more camping with an emphasis on utility sites. The limitations are the cost of development although the actual construction would probably be underwritten by donors and volunteers. There might be an increased cost of ranger staffing but this would have to be an item discussed with the labor representatives. The goal would be to increase camping revenue without adding full time staff.

Some areas to consider:

-First, add about six standard sites along road going back to "burn pile" area beyond campsite #22. This would be a relatively easy addition that could be done as a volunteers' project and would open up some areas that are of interest for viewing (large spruce trees).

-Next, open up an area that would be suitable for extended season use. This would be on the picnic side of the park along existing logging roads/trails behind shop and west of group camp. This area is infected with laminar root rot, fir trees are dyeing and will soon be gone and the area should be replanted with native resistant trees. The diseased trees may be removed IAW RCW 75.\_\_\_\_? It is also one of the few areas not affected by winter flooding and is close to

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utilities making it prime for utility sites. Develop the camping sites as volunteer/donor contributions allow and plan for later conversion to utility sites. As funding allows, add a comfort station with ADA facilities and showers for group camp.

-Finally, expand the group camp in the orchard area. Winter access could be via an overflow road where the one primitive camp site now sits. There are several areas not affected by flooding that could support a number of camp sites and/or a group shelter suitable for extended season use. Volunteer and donor money, labor and materials are available for the shelter. This would also be a good place to place another camping area comfort station with ADA and shower facilities. It is not prone to flooding, is close enough to support entire camp area (with showers) and is close to an existing drain field. One major complaint from campers is the lack of good/maintained rest room facilities.

To support these improvements to the park, there needs to be a concerted **marketing strategy and marketing campaign to support this (and other) smaller parks**. There are several things that could be done. You could stipulate that (or encourage) reduced or no charge camping be in these non reservation parks. You could also have a system that would give campers a way to determine the chances of finding a camp site at non reservation parks. Schafer is 10 miles off the highway, a long way to drive only to find out it is full. You could try placing one (moveable) cabin (again, available through donation) in the park to gauge interest in something other than tent camping, especially since the park has only ten utility sites. A very important requirement for any business plan is knowing who your customers are and where they come from. The current registration envelopes are woefully inadequate. Design better envelopes to get better survey data or detail camp hosts/staff to do some surveys to get a better analysis of campers, use of facilities and customer satisfaction.

#### **Improving and expanding use beyond picnicking and camping:**

**The trail system in the park is only lightly used.** They could use more ADA accessible areas, better promotion with trail clubs and perhaps better signage for interpretation. On the **Northeast** side of the park, look at limiting the spread of laminar root rot by replacing diseased fir trees with native resistant species. Look at possible expansion of park boundary to include some of the adjacent property (Hakes, Young, Hliboki) that contains prairie environment and some listed species (Oregon silverspot butterfly and violets). Original trail infringed on Hliboki property. Look at expansion east to protect river and open up undeveloped area for viewing of "natural" area. Also, this would increase fishing access to the river. On the **Northwest** side of the river (The Fairbrother cabin site) reopen the old riverside trail for fishing and river access. This might reduce some of the stress on the shoreline through the camping area. Where the fishtrap existed, there is a good opportunity for an ADA accessible viewing area and short trail. Open up some other smaller trails through the area where winter floods promote a deciduous forested area good for viewing plant life. Remove invasive ivy on old Fairbrother site and look at possibility of using detectors to mark the site.

**Downstream** improve and expand the trail from the back of the camp area that runs downstream. Part of the trail could be ADA and the rest would be good for fishermen/hikers. Look at expanding with easement/purchase of downstream shoreline.

**Another improvement to the park would be pedestrian safety.** Work with the Mason County Public Works to improve safety, especially along the northern approach, by cutting back vegetation to improve drivers' sight distance, adding fluorescent flags to pedestrian signs in the summer, and possible putting in traffic calming devices such as rumble strips or a raised spot (not a traffic bump) on the bridge approach. At one time, there was also thought given to moving the park entrance south several hundred feet. This might be a good option.

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**Improve the cultural and interpretive life of the park**

Work with local museums for interpretive displays either in the camp booth or in other display areas. Make scheduling of events a responsibility of the park manager. Work with ethnic groups/organizations/ music groups, etc to encourage use of facilities. Formalize walking tours either guided or self guided for the park. Work to insure publicity both before and after events to bring in visitors and to remind people of the value of a non urban park.

**Improving the park long-term boundaries:**

I would prioritize expansion.

- 1) First, work with south property owner(s) to protect visual aspects of group camp area through conservation easement/purchase
- 2) Try to gain easement/ownership of property downstream on east side owned by Green Diamond? This would allow expansion of trail at back of camping area and protect the river.
- 3) Purchase property on east side of Decker Creek to allow access to river property across from camping area that is landlocked. Decker Creek is a popular access area for fishermen in the winter. The private property is in a flood area and is probably unbuildable.
- 4) Long term boundary to north and east to include some prairie land and river area.
- 5) A survey would probably show that some property in the camping area is actually privately owned (by me). It is not a problem now but could possibly be corrected through a swap and/or boundary line adjustment.
- 6) Consider Palmer property on Northwest and South sides of park. Was originally purchased as a buffer for park. Expansion into those areas is probably unlikely but not inconceivable. It is presently vacant/forest land. There is a good possibility some or all of the forty acres south of the picnic area will be sold in the next ten years. Approximately 20 acres is untouched forest area. Twenty acres is replanted with maple/alder/fir and redwood. Property in the camp area and across on the northwest side of eight acres is old fish hatchery property with tanks still there. It is presently vacant land with a service road.



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## LAKE SYLVIA INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Lake Sylvia State Park sees thousands of visitors annually. Considered from this perspective, as well as the recent outreach to representatives by the Grays Harbor County Constituency asking for help to save the park from closure, it is a successful state park. Still, the number of visitors, and thereby, annual income of the Park could be increased immensely with the installment of a good interpretive program. In my experience as a Park Aide, all of the Campers and Day visitors I've spoken to say they would definitely be interested in attending an interpretive program if one was available. Guests at Lake Sylvia have many questions about the history of the park and about the local environment. The park is considered quite beautiful (A family from Monroe asked me to pass on a thank you for the great pictures on the website. The images led them in their decision to take their annual campout to Lake Sylvia), and it is also considered important to the heritage of Montesano and Gray's Harbor county.

This request then, follows verbal approval by area manager Arnold Hampton, and is a request to regional headquarters, to go ahead with planning an interpretive program at Lake Sylvia State Park.

Lake Sylvia State Park is already equipped with several unique features that attract people to the site. These include:

- Close proximity to the town of Montesano, making it easy for travelers and even locals, to plan and equip themselves for a trip to the park, and onward up the Olympic Peninsula, or down the Pacific Coast
- The historic importance of the site to the social and economic development of Gray's Harbor county (all of the locals know about the old Lake Sylvia logging camp).
- The historically significant wooden dam built by loggers to control the log runs, manage the lake, and at one point, provide all the electricity to the town of Montesano.
- Rocky mounded pathways which are the reclaimed remnants of a once elaborate railroad system, used to help deliver timber and cedar shingles as far south as California.
- Areas where old growth stumps still show the indentations created by loggers who claimed the trees for lumber 125-150 years ago.
- A healthy pioneer forest, moving into second growth status after growing out of the clear-cut area that used to be part of the historic Lake Sylvia lumber camp.
- A man-made Lake, stocked with fish for recreational fishing
- There is an extensive and popular trail system in the area that is excellent for hiking and mountain biking, and receives visitors year round
- The Park is located next to a working forest, run on a model of sustainability by the City of Montesano

The Majority of people who visit Lake Sylvia are professional class, and working class families. In the on-the-grounds moments I've had to interview these people, I've found that the working class people are interested in Lake Sylvia's history as a saw mill and logging camp, and how the area recovered well enough for them to take their kids there to go fishing. The professional class people are interested in learning more about the surrounding environment, plant and animal life, and how to best get to know and enjoy it in the few days they have to spend there. All diversities of people who I've met at the park are interested in learning more about the interrelatedness of economics, enjoyment, and how these factors relate to their own lives. The theme of Lake Sylvia Park as a whole is based in the idea of people in relationship to the outdoors. That means everything from hiking, fishing, and camping to understanding the history of logging and homesteading, and the creation of a city in the woods.

The ideal interpretive program then would carry an overall theme of:

"The adaptation and success of human beings *and* their surroundings in the presence of well-managed natural resources."

In the interest of fostering outdoor recreation and education at Washington state Parks and instilling a sense of stewardship and desire to protect our common history into the State Parks centennial, and beyond, this interpretive program should travel through time and space in the surrounding areas of Lake Sylvia State Park, in support of this adaptation theme.

What does this interpretive program look like? Since we're speaking of a whole Interpretive program, let's look at it in phases of development, with references to activities that can occur throughout the process.

## RS 2 of 3

### Phase One: Historic and environmental signage/ interpretive panels

- 8 2'x 3' interpretive panels mounted on walls, or ground posts in soon to be usable kitchen rental building, these signs include;
- circa 1900's picture of Lake Sylvia Saw Mill with reprint of a Vidette article from July 2, 1927
- Picture of the Lake Sylvia shingle mill, with a copy of a handwritten history of Betty West, descendent of the first homesteader at "Lake Silva"
- Pictures of Lake Sylvia in the 1920's and Lake Sylvia day use area now, with paragraph about when it became a state park
- Pictures of Devil's Club and Poison Oak with descriptions of each
- Timeline picture of Forest recovery, from clear cut to mature
- Picture of a Cougar, with explanations of physical size and abilities and habits
- Picture of a Beaver and a Mountain Beaver, highlighting differences (one burrows, one builds, etc.)

Activities in phase one can include, but are not limited to; Bringing back the Junior Ranger program, with special visits from Eager Beaver. Scavenger hunts for things found at Lake Sylvia, some of which relate to historic logging, and starting Naturalist interpreter walks explaining what's edible and what's not, and collecting edibles to take back to kitchen and have participants help make into food.

### Phase Two: Activities involving social and economic relationship between Montesano and historic Lake Sylvia

- Collaborative effort with the city of Montesano, and/ or Gray's Harbor chamber of commerce to create historic walking maps that lead to sites important to the heritage of Montesano and its relationship to Lake Sylvia State Park (Chehalis Museum, Abel House b&b, historic sites/homes, etc.)
- Heritage hikes from Montesano to Lake Sylvia State Park (perhaps through the working forest)
- Walking maps through sites at the Park that explain environmental aspects of the area in relationship to the Olympic Peninsula region.

Activities for phase two can include, but are not limited to: Ethno botany interpretive walks on Lake Sylvia trails, in which participants have the option of weaving a ethno botany first aid basket out of strips of paper and are given prizes of "plant trading cards", if they can win at "plant jeopardy" after the walk. Fire safety talks (by Smokey of course) are another option which could prelude Campfire singing of old timber shanties (there are entire books of these out there) and a visit from local logger poets.

### Phase Three: Activities involving a permanent Interpretive Center:

- Tour the Bunkhouse; design the interpretive center off a picture of an old Loggers Bunkhouse. Move the interpretive signage from the kitchen in, and seek donation displays of old Logger photos and local family's ancestors (the Wilder Family has already offered to help with some of this). The photos would have to be either very general, or very specific to Lake Sylvia. As we don't want to put the Chehalis Valley Museum out of business.
- Include a small presentation area and a screen for movies and slide shows.
- Collaborate with Zoos or places like Northwest Trek (for Taxonomy statues), and Pioneer Farm museum to display pieces on loan from them (in return for offering a venue to do their own presentations to Lake Sylvia Guests. Not advertisements, mind you but outreach specialists/speakers)
- Allow kids to build Dams in a water/sensory table and to place models of buildings and roads to create towns.

Activities for phase three can include, but are not limited to, all of the above activities, as well as movie presentations about logging and timber, green architecture, historic picture slide shows by local elders, stories from the Chehalis tribe (if they should be willing to do so), and an informative play about fire safety and forest survival. The play can be followed with a fun quiz, in which correct answers are reward with a Lincoln log to keep, and then all the participants get together and make a frontier town with them, building off each other's logs. Logs and planks, like early Montesano.

The greatest challenges needing to be overcome in order to see this interpretive program through include the following:

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- The seasonal employees most capable of developing this interpretive program are seasonal Park Aides. Their positions end in September, and during the busy season, they cannot invest as much time as the development of this program needs.
- Lake Sylvia State Park has no interpretive specialists on staff to carry the activities through.
- The park is without an interpretive supervisor, or other staff member whose position description includes organizing the logistics of a program of this nature.
- There is no known budget allotted at this time to the development of an interpretive program at Lake Sylvia State Park, yet there is definitely a public interest in having access to an interpretive center and/or interpretive program.

The hope of this interpretive program is to answer questions about the human and environmental history of the area, and how both the people and the environment have adapted over centuries of existence. It is also intended to interest people in stewardship of these incredible cultural and economic resources for generations yet to come. In the perfect effect, it will instill a sense of being part of a great historical story in the minds of the participants, and the Story of Lake Sylvia will be a story they want to see continue far into the future. A future where there will be no unnecessary clear cutting and the woods around Lake Sylvia will be allowed to grow up into second growth or even mature forest, reducing the pollution of the lake and the over-siltification of Silvia Creek. This would improve both the natural beauty and economic vitality of the Lake Sylvia-Montesano area. It would even show the need for support to Washington State Parks.